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## **DADDYS LIL DARLING HEADS GRADE II, \$200,000 GOLDEN ROD**

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Wednesday, Nov. 23, 2016)** – Normandy Farm's **Daddys Lil Darling**, the Pocahontas (Grade II) winner who was runner-up in the Alcibiades (GI) and fourth in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies (GI), tops a field of a dozen 2-year-old fillies entered for Saturday's 73<sup>rd</sup> running of the \$200,000 Golden Rod (GII) at Churchill Downs.

Saturday's 1 1/16-mile race is the co-headliner on the penultimate day of the 21-day Fall Meet. Billed as "Stars of Tomorrow II," each of the 12 races is exclusively for 2-year-olds that may have aspirations of trail-blazing their way to next spring's Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands and Longines Kentucky Oaks.

The Golden Rod – a "Prep Season" race on the "Road to the Kentucky Oaks" in which the Top 4 finishers will receive 10-4-2-1 points, respectively – goes as Race 9 at 4:57 p.m. (all times Eastern). First post is 1 p.m. The co-featured \$200,000 Kentucky Jockey (GII), which attracted 12 colts and geldings, is Race 11 at 5:56 p.m.

Daddys Lil Darling (5-2-1-0—\$324,165), trained by **Kenny McPeek**, landed post No. 9 under leading rider **Corey Lanerie** and was made the 7-2 early favorite on **Mike Battaglia's** morning line odds. The Kentucky-bred daughter of Scat Daddy is the lone graded stakes winner in the field.

After winning the \$200,000 Pocahontas (GII) at Churchill Downs in September, Daddys Lil Darling finished second, one-length behind **Dancing Rags**, in the \$400,000 Alcibiades (GI) at Keeneland on Oct. 7. A trip to California for the \$2 million Breeders' Cup Fillies (GI) at Santa Anita on Nov. 5 resulted in a fourth-place finish behind longshot winner **Champagne Room**, **Valadorna** and **American Gal**. Daddys Lil Darling, who broke from post 11 that day, was wide throughout in the Juvenile Fillies but continued with interest to finish fourth, five lengths back of the winner.

Golden Rod success fresh off a Breeders' Cup run would be nothing new to McPeek, who won the race in 2010 with **Kathmanblu** after she ran third in that year's Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf. Both races, however, were staged at Churchill Downs that year.

Daddys Lil Darling's chief rivals include **Clearview Stable's** Pocahontas runner-up **Ever So Clever** (4-2-1-0—\$109,500), a 2 3/4-length Keeneland allowance winner on Oct. 19 for Hall of Fame trainer **Steve Asmussen**, and **Dennis Farkas' Fun** (4-1-1-1—\$115,400), who was three lengths back in third for trainer **Ian Wilkes** in the Alcibiades (GI).

The race also attracted the top three finishers in the \$82,340 Rags to Riches Overnight Stakes, which was contested on Churchill Downs' Oct. 30 opening day card: **James M. Miller's Lovely Bernadette** (4-3-0-1—\$115,837), trained by **Jimmy DiVito**; **Katherine G. Ball's China Grove** (7-1-3-0—\$106,646), conditioned by **Ben Colebrook**; and **Coffeepot Stables' Farrell** (3-1-0-1—\$36,037) from the **Wayne Catalano** barn.

The complete Golden Rod field from the rail out (with jockeys and morning line odds): **Gris Gris** (Miguel Mena, 20-1), **Ever So Clever** (Ricardo Santana Jr., 6-1), **Dance Proposal** (Joe Rocco Jr., 12-1), **My Sweet Stella** (Florent Geroux, 12-1), **Someday Soon** (Declan Cannon, 30-1), **China Grove** (Shaun Bridgmohan, 12-1), **Funny Holiday** (Chris Landeros, 10-1), **Fun** (Brian Hernandez Jr., 6-1), **Daddys Lil Darling** (Corey Lanerie, 7-2), **Dream Dancing** (Julien Leparoux, 5-1), **Farrell** (Channing Hill, 10-1) and **Lovely Bernadette** (Robby Albarado, 5-1).

**John Oxley's Dream Dancing** (4-1-1-0—\$88,000), fourth in the Pocahontas (GII) and fifth in the Alcibiades (GI) for trainer **Mark Casse**, will add blinkers for the Golden Rod. Julien Leparoux rides Dream Dancing and could tie Hall of Fame jockey **Don Brumfield** for most wins in the race. Leparoux previously won the Golden Rod aboard **Pure Clan** (2007), **Kathmanblu** (2010) and **Carina Mia** (2015).

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Hall of Fame trainer **D. Wayne Lukas** hopes to add his record sixth Golden Rod win with Zayat Stables' My Sweet Stella (5-1-1-0—\$47,976). Lukas' five previous winners in the race are **Fancy Ribbons** (1990), **Lilly Capote** (1994), **City Band** (1996), **Love Lock** (1997) and **Be Gentle** (2003).

Churchill Downs, the world's most legendary racetrack, has conducted Thoroughbred racing and presented America's greatest race, the Kentucky Derby, continuously since 1875. Located in Louisville, the flagship racetrack of Churchill Downs Incorporated (NASDAQ: CHDN) offers year-round simulcast wagering at the historic track. Churchill Downs will conduct the 143<sup>rd</sup> running of the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands on May 6, 2017. The track's Fall Meet is scheduled for Oct. 30-Nov. 27. Churchill Downs has hosted the Breeders' Cup World Championships eight times and the event will return to the track in 2018. Information is available at [www.ChurchillDowns.com](http://www.ChurchillDowns.com).

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